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IV, Excess of Births. Although in most countries the excess of births has continued to increase, there are some countries like England, Scotland, and Sweden, where the movement in the opposite direction has already begun. There is a limit to the decrease in the death-rate, and the more nearly this is reached, the slower is the decrease, but when a decrease in the fecundity appears it becomes increasingly rapid. The author thinks that it is but a question of time when the countries with improving economic conditions shall show a falling off in the excess of births.

V, Malthus' Laws of Population. Malthus found in moral restraint one of the causes which kept population at the level of the food supply. The effect of its action was to postpone the age at marriage. But he did not place enough weight upon similar motives to limit the number of children after marriage. Dr. Mombert thinks that Malthus failed to give sufficient weight to the fact that sexual desire is not constant, but that there is a close relation between it and economic and social position, a relation which is much closer than that assumed by Malthus to exist between social position and marriage.

The book closes with the prophecy that soon France will not be the only country to be concerned with the slow increase of its population.

On laying down the book the impression remains that although some of the conclusions reached may need to be revised, the time devoted to its study has been well spent, for it is not often that one meets a better application of the statistical method to an important social problem. It would be well if a similar piece of intensive work could be done for this country.

WILLIAM B. BAILEY.

Yale University.

Report of the Providence Conference of the National Municipal League. By CLINTON ROGERS WOODRUFF, Editor. (Philadelphia: National Municipal League, 1907. \$2.)

This volume records the work of the National Municipal League during the year 1907, and at its annual conference held at Providence, R. I., November 19-22, 1907.

This organization, under the efficient management of its Secretary, Clinton Rogers Woodruff, has steadily grown in value and influence during the thirteen years of its existence. It is not too much to say that each volume of its proceedings has been better than its predecessors, and the present one is no exception to the rule.

The first part of the volume is taken up with the reports of committees and of the work of the various sessions of the Conference. The more formal papers appear at the end. Although somewhat less weighty perhaps, the first part of the volume is by no means less interesting. It shows the scope of the work of the National Municipal League which now has representatives in every part of the United States; and demonstrates the great value of an association of this kind in bringing together thinking men from all parts the Union who can meet at informal conferences, and exchange their views and experiences with regard to matters in which, as civic reformers, they are interested.

The informal discussion concerning the desirability of separating national and state elections (page 27) is a good example of the value of such a conference. This discussion covers 28 pages, nine speakers representing widely different parts of the country participated in it, besides Attorney General Bonaparte, president of the League, who closed the discussion.

In addition to the work at its conferences, the League awards annually a prize for the best essay on a subject relating to municipal reform, to be competed for by the students of universities; the prize for 1907 was upon *The Relation of the Municipality to the Water Supply* and was awarded to a Yale undergraduate, with honorable mention of a Harvard undergraduate (who won first prize in 1908).

The League has also undertaken, as part of its educational work, to see that proper libraries on subjects relating to civic economics are established at the principal universities and colleges in the country.

Turning to the latter part of the book, we find a large number of addresses, all of which are worthy of serious study. The annual address by the Secretary is a comprehensive review of the many changes in civic conditions which have taken place in all the principal cities of the country. The annual address by the President,

Charles J. Bonaparte, is a distinct contribution to literature on the subject which he treated, Government by Public Opinion, and is a keen, logical, commonsense consideration of the uses and abuses of the press. Among other things, Mr. Bonaparte said: "the power of the press * * * arises from the fact that it speaks, or is believed to speak what everybody is saying at the time. As soon as a paper is recognized as somebody's 'organ', as expressing the views and wishes and opinions of any particular man or set of men, its healthful influence as a newspaper is gone. * * * There is, however, one thing which they [the newspapers] must do if they would be, in this field or in any other, an agency for good, and that is to think and tell the truth. A habitual liar is disqualified for any good work. Unless a man see things as they are and would have others thus see them likewise, he can never aid in making them better."

Other addresses, which space will permit us only to mention, include those on The Galveston Plan of Government by Prof. William Bennett Munro, of Harvard University; The Des Moines Plan by Silas B. Allen, of Des Moines, Iowa; The Newport Plan by Rear Admiral Chadwick, U. S. N.; How Chicago is Winning Good Government by George C. Sikes, secretary of the Municipal Voters' League of Chicago; The Evil Influence of National Parties in Municipal Elections, by Brand Whitlock, of Toledo, Ohio; two addresses upon Separation of Elections by Thos. Raeburn White, of Philadelphia and Richard L. Gay, of Boston; and an Outline of a Model System of State and Local Taxation by Lawson Purdy, president of the Department of Taxes and Assessments of the City of New York.

There is also appended an elaborate report on taxation by a committee of the League, to which is annexed a series of valuable articles by various experts on the subject, prepared under the chairmanship of Lawson Purdy, president of the New York Board of Taxes and Assessments.

The volume closes with a series of addresses delivered before the American Civic Association, which held a joint session this year with the National Municipal League, and the dinner speeches which constitute an agreeable close to an extremely valuable volume.

Philadelphia.

THOMAS RAEburn WHITE.